

# Pygmalion: a review

(Editor's Note: Professor Robert Mulder teaches in the Department of English at Chowan. He has been ably assisting in special programs at the college and helps to promote cultural activities. Professor Mulder attended the Friday, March 7, performance of "Pygmalion" as a special representative for The Chowanian. Below are his comments.)

By PROFESSOR ROBERT G. MULDER

When theater enthusiasts attend a junior college production, they do not expect complete perfection, for rarely is such found—even on Broadway; however, they have a right to demand in return for their time, effort, and expense a good play and an entertaining evening from the stage. This is just what Friday night's audience expected and received when the Chowan Players presented their final performance of George Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion" in McDowell Columns Auditorium on March 7.

Director Edith Larson had a right to sit back and observe the production from the last row in the auditorium, as the many hundreds of hours of hard work were resulting in a total student production front stage as well as back. Mrs. Larson had carefully trained her players, for Friday night's performance was staged smoothly and positively.

Upon entering the auditorium, the portico of St. Paul's Church quietly awaited curtain time. Magnificent Columns freshly painted and a luminous center window attested to the talented artistic efforts of Bob Lawrence of Asheville and Pete Sykes of Norfolk. This set, designed for Act I, promised the audience an interesting evening at the theater.

The part of Eliza Doolittle was played in a sparkling manner by Dale

Willard of Frederick, Maryland. Miss Willard handled the transformation in speech and action which this play required in a remarkably professional manner. Her quick, crisp statement: "I'm a good girl, I am," will long remain in the minds of those who saw her brilliant performance as the Cockney flower girl.

Professor Henry Higgins, with his 130 vowel sounds and his determination to make a duchess out of the dragon-tailed guttersnipe (Elisa) was portrayed in a freshly original manner by Truett Duncan of Murfreesboro. Mr. Duncan worked hard to present his characterization in a convincing way, and the seriousness with which he approached the part of Higgins was obvious.

Colonel Pickering was actively portrayed by Harry Greenlaw of Fredericksburg, who completes his second year on the Chowan stage. Mr. Greenlaw handled his role very well and indicated in his performance the ease and grace which come with surrounding stage familiarity.

Also taking the part of a transformational figure, Tom Garner of Newport (Alfred Doolittle) received his share of laughs and rightly so, for he looked, spoke, and acted well the part of the conniving father of Eliza. Mr. Garner's voice and stage manner displayed his understanding of the characterization which was his. His purposeful stage movements and his self-induced wit, along with Shaw's own bits of satire, created an unforgettable character.

The audience did not see enough of Freddie Hill, a cultured young admirer of Eliza's, played exuberantly by Richard Lalonde. His having had less than a week of rehearsal was certainly not obvious to the audience, and viewers would like to see more of this young man in future productions.

Brenda Trimmer of Richmond, was Mrs. Pearce, housekeeper of Bachelor Higgins. Miss Trimmer was particularly moving in her role which actually demanded keeping the play moving in many instances.

The part of Mrs. Higgins was brilliantly portrayed by Pamela Keyes, who was first presented to a Chowan audience in "Life With Father." Miss Keyes, a native of Petersburg, controlled her characterization well and stayed in command of the situation with dignity and charm.

Minor roles were played positively by other Chowan Players. Friday's audience was reminded again that



Mel Weston, freshman of Richmond, Va., and Dale Willard of Frederick, Md., are seen in an actual scene from "Pygmalion" which was staged at Chowan College March 5, 6, and 7. Mel played the role of Freddie Hill and Dale played the role of Eliza Doolittle, the Cockney flower girl who became a charming and polished lady in the play. "Pygmalion" is the dramatic version of "My Fair Lady."

there are really no minor roles at all, for even these characterizations were played well with major intent and sincerity.

The performance of Friday evening climaxed the efforts of many behind-the-scene personnel, a highly dedicated group of people necessary to present a drama as massive as "Pygmalion." Both the seen (props) and the unseen (sounds) must be carefully controlled in a dramatic production of this type.

Stage manager, Frank Davis, and student directors, Diane Trump and Pete Sykes, played an important part in "Pygmalion's" success. Credit is also due Odell Cleveland who headed properties, Mike Herbstreigh who headed make-up, and Janelle Mitchiner and Ann Vick who headed costumes.

Very obvious was the use of colorful costumes, modeled well by all of the casts young ladies. Particularly lovely was Miss Diane Davis of Murfreesboro, who played the part of Clara Hill. Authentic props also added flavor to the stage; noticeable was the old-fashioned phonograph and the fan-backed wicker chair. These were only a few of the mentionable extras in "Pygmalion."

Though every performance may not always indicate the hundreds of man hours given to a play of this calibre, Friday night's production by the Chowan Players certainly indicated this fact. Errors which may have slightly marred the opening performances were carefully corrected in the final showing. We shall look forward to Director Larson's and the Chowan Players' next production.

## Volleyball big hit with girls

The 1968-69 girls volleyball team at Chowan College has completed its first undefeated season after a schedule of 4 contests involving 8 games.

Coached by Mrs. Janet Collins, who handles physical education for women at the college, the team met the College of the Albermarle, East Carolina University, North Carolina Wesleyan, and Atlantic Christian College for a total of 8 matches giving up only an average of five points each match out of a possible 15 points for the win.

Sophomores on the volleyball squad are Sandra (Sandy) Lynn Wilson of Virginia Beach, Va.; Patricia Kay Francis of Capron, Va.; Karen Dale White of Whaleyville, Va.; Deidra (Dee) Jay Shumaker of Temperanceville, Va.; Vicki Maude Gilbert of Winston-Salem, N. C.; Donna Kaye Fesperman of Chesapeake, Va. Freshman are Karen Jane Lynch of Shelbyville, Delaware; Dianne Williams of South Mills, N. C.; and Jeannie Lu Gay of Charlottesville, Va.